

TESTIMONY OF THE
CONNECTICUT COALITION OF PROPERTY OWNERS
GREATER DANBURY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
LUMBER DEALERS' ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT
MILFORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**RE: HB 6924 AA INCREASING THE AMOUNT OF DAMAGES THAT
MAY BE CLAIMED IN A SMALL CLAIMS COURT ACTION**

Before the Legislature's Judiciary Committee
Friday, March 6, 2015
12:00 PM, Room 2E, Legislative Office Building

Good morning. My name is Marshall Collins. I am here today in my capacity as Counsel for Government Relations for the above named organizations. Collectively they represent nearly 2,200 employers in Connecticut. They are predominantly small businesses and employ approximately 125,000 men and women in Connecticut.

The above organizations strongly support HB 6924 and request that it be amended to include an increase in the maximum amount of minimum payments to \$75 per week. If the jurisdiction of Small Claims Court is increased without increasing the maximum amount of minimum payments that can be ordered, the relief will be meaningless.

The Judicial Department failed to increase the maximum amount of payments that a magistrate can order when jurisdiction was increased from \$3,500 to \$5,000. If it failed to act again, then if a judgment of \$9,000 was awarded and payments ordered at \$35 per week, it would take the plaintiff more than 257 weeks, almost 6 years, to recover their debt! Even at \$75 per week, it would take 120 weeks to recover the debt.

Small Claims Court is the people's court. It is a court of equity; but there is no equity in forcing the wronged party to wait 6 years to collect a debt. The magistrate should have the discretion to order up to the maximum payment, which should be at least \$75 per week.

Increasing Small Claims jurisdiction is overdue and would reduce the workload of Superior Court dockets. HB 6924 makes access to our judicial system for both consumers and businesses more affordable. It is a balanced approach and should be amended as we have requested and favorably reported.

This completes my testimony. Thank you for your consideration.